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Sihanouk, Norodom

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The CIA;

CIA-Cambodia.

(original Sihanouk)

Books

Sihanouk's
war with
the CIA

MY WAR WITH THE CIA:

THE MEMOIRS OF PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK

By Norodom Sihanouk as related to Wilfred Burchett

Pantheon Books, New York, 1973, 272 pages, \$7.95

Until the barbaric invasion of Cambodia by U.S. and Saigon forces in April 1970, few people in America were familiar with the country.

In part this was natural, for Cambodia was eclipsed by the main thrust of American imperialism in Indochina that was taking place in neighboring Vietnam and Laos. But it also must be recognized that the Cambodian people and head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk were victims of Western racism and officially inspired U.S. lies that dismissed as nothing the long history of the Cambodian nation and ridiculed Prince Sihanouk's struggle to keep his country neutral and free from the plague of imperialist war.

"Colorful" was only the least condescending of the descriptions reserved for Sihanouk by Western writers who, either out of ignorance or with deliberate intent, drew portraits of Sihanouk that omitted the heart of the matter, the many years of U.S. imperialist intrigues against Cambodia and Sihanouk's resistance to it.

But millions of Americans who were participating in antiwar struggles, even though unable to penetrate the smokescreen of U.S. lies and myths about Cambodia, began to perceive, if only dimly, that there must have been some wisdom behind the policies of Prince Sihanouk, who managed to keep his country out of the war while at the same time refusing to become Washington's puppet or to allow the U.S. to use Cambodia as a base for U.S. aggression against Vietnam and Laos.

Among Americans of goodwill, Sihanouk's policies gained further respect because the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (and later the Provisional Revolutionary Government) developed harmonious relations with their neighbor and respected Cambodian neutrality. By contrast, the governments of the U.S. puppets in Saigon and the pro-U.S. regime in Bangkok followed the lead of their Washington mentors and together with the U.S., intrigued against Cambodian sovereignty and neutrality. That intrigue culminated in the CIA-inspired coup which deposed Sihanouk in March 1970.

From the time of the 1954 Geneva settlement, the U.S., Saigon and Bangkok encroached on Cambodia's sovereignty: border regions were bombed by the U.S. and Saigon; Thai and Saigon troops made ground incursions into Cambodia, falsely claiming segments of Cambodian territory; the U.S., Saigon and Bangkok engaged in economic warfare against Cambodia; and the CIA and its hired mercenaries plotted against Sihanouk, more than once marking the Cambodian leader for death.

up to its historic responsibilities.

In recent months, due to the barbarism of the Nixon administration's terror bombing of Cambodia, Americans are again awakening to the true face of the "Nixon doctrine" which is being defeated by the resistance of the Cambodian people. Their national leader, Prince Sihanouk, recently made a journey across his country during a period of some of the heaviest U.S. bombings. His trip also effectively demonstrated the broad unity of the people's resistance movement in Cambodia and their government both of which are headed by Sihanouk, despite CIA myths to the contrary—some of which unfortunately have been accepted by certain persons on the American "left."

At a time when there is no indication when the U.S. aggression against Cambodia is going to end, the publication of Prince Sihanouk's story could not be more appropriate. Biographical accounts are generally regarded as self-serving, but this is basically a political story. Prince Sihanouk has faithfully recounted the history of his efforts to preserve Cambodia's independence, which has been at the root of his beliefs for many decades.

It was these beliefs which enabled Sihanouk, hand-picked as king by the French colonialists, to increasingly oppose French colonialism, to resist the intrusions of U.S. imperialism until he was overthrown and to confound Washington by declaring he would fight the Cambodian traitors until the legitimate government was restored in Phnom Penh. When Washington planned the overthrow of Sihanouk, it must have assumed that he would immediately retire to the Riviera or even if that was not his own inclination, that he would have no other choice for lack of popular support or international recognition.

Sihanouk relates the story of his own education, in which French tutelage could not erase deeply nurtured patriotism, that by his own admission was originally somewhat narrow. But his education was aided by the reactionary French colonialists and American imperialism, which tried to make Cambodia their own instrument, by the Vietnamese resistance which was the backbone of the struggles against the French and the U.S., and by socialist countries, especially China and the DRV, which treated Sihanouk and Cambodia's policies with respect.

NOTHING SURPRISING

In retrospect, in the light of the story accurately recounted by Sihanouk, there should have been nothing surprising in the fact that the once-king, who had forever renounced royal prerogatives and who asked for little foreign "aid," immediately chose the path of national resistance in prerogatives and who asked for little foreign "aid," immediately chose the path of resistance in unity all the progressive and revolutionary forces of Cambodia.

Before being forced by the Nixon administration to embark on armed resistance, Sihanouk had tried to create a popular administration with broad national participation. One of the main problems with this effort was the U.S. attempt to undermine it by U.S. "economic" aid that promoted reactionary forces and the

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Some of these truths had begun to penetrate the fog of CIA-obscureism by the time of the 1970 U.S.-Saigon invasion of Cambodia. Thus when the U.S.-Saigon aggression occurred it was met on two fronts, both totally unexpected by the architects of U.S. imperialism. The two fronts were the heroic and successful resistance by the Cambodian people and the massive upsurge of popular strength to the present day, and the massive upsurge of popular antiwar resistance in America, one of the finer chapters of a movement which we must truthfully admit has often failed to live

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